



## Friar Works to Keep Farmers Farming

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**EDITORS NOTE:** This story is one in a series that features DATCP employees and their programs.

MADISON – Frank Friar has been a member of the Wisconsin Farm Center team at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for almost five years, and his main objective is to keep farmers farming in a way that is not only profitable but good for their lives too. On the phone or on the farm, Friar uses his years of experience to make that happen.

“We are very fortunate to have Frank working at the Department in the Wisconsin Farm Center,” said Mike Powers, DATCP’s Agricultural Development Division Administrator. “He has a positive approach and he listens carefully. With his farming background and financial experience, he helps farmers analyze options and determine what is best for them, their farm and the future.”

Friar grew up on a hog and beef farm near Boscobel. Friar always wanted to buy more land and farm, but his father encouraged him to go to school and see what was out there. He earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree in agricultural education from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. After serving three years in the army during the Vietnam War, Friar taught at community college in Austin, Minnesota. Friar was on track for a PhD when he decided to get a job working directly with farmers, which he did with Badgerland Financial.

He retired, after a 30 year career, from Badgerland Financial where he started by assisting with accounts, income taxes and farm records before moving into management. He retired as Senior Vice President of Branch Operations. But Friar loved working, and after a short break, he entered the workforce again by joining the DATCP Farm Center.

“It is easy to come to work each day, because I get a good feeling that the Farm Center is truly helping people,” said Friar. “While it is hard to deliver tough news to some farmers, I always say that before we can offer treatment, we have to give a diagnosis. As soon as we identify the issues, we can make recommendations to improve the farm.”

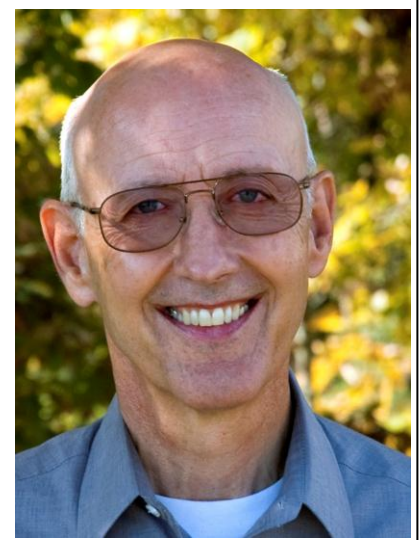
There is no such thing as a normal day in the Farm Center. Every time Friar answers the phone, he never knows who will need help or what the situation will be.

If a farmer calls for assistance, Friar first analyzes the financials provided by the farmer. He looks at the big picture to make a recommendation if the operation is viable or if adaptations need to be made. Friar then will make a house call to visit the farm.

“It is important to meet with the farmers one-on-one at their table to see the farm firsthand, understand their objectives and assist in the best way possible,” explained Friar. “Then if changes need to be made, we can call on a team of trusted experts to get the best results.”

The Farm Center staff may collaborate with the local team of University of Wisconsin-Extension agents, agricultural educators, veterinarians and nutritionists.

The Farm Center is busy year-round, and the types of calls vary with the season and weather. In the past three years, Friar has seen an increase in transition and estate planning.



Frank Friar is an Economic Development Consultant at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

“My favorite part of the job is helping people. In a transition, I work to help each generation and make everyone a winner,” added Friar. “The older generation deserves a nice retirement, and the beginning farmer needs a strong start to his or her business.”

There are certain calls to the Farm Center that Friar will never forget. Whether it is a farmer who has not only run out of money to feed his livestock but also his family, or farmers who feel there is no hope, Friar is on the other end of the phone to listen to their stories and provide assistance. Friar and the Farm Center team understand the business of farming and can connect farmers with the most appropriate resources, as efficiently as possible.

“The Wisconsin Farm Center is here to stay. Agriculture is a business and will always keep changing, and the Farm Center will adapt to the changing times,” concluded Friar. “A neutral third-party opinion will always be important to a farmer, and we are here to do all we can to offer it.”

The Wisconsin Farm Center toll-free number is 1-800-942-2474 and email is [farmcenter@wisconsin.gov](mailto:farmcenter@wisconsin.gov). Connect with DATCP on Twitter at [twitter.com/widatcp](https://twitter.com/widatcp) or Facebook at [facebook.com/widatcp](https://facebook.com/widatcp).

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